

**Public Works Committee  
Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Thursday, April 3, 2014  
Town Room, Town Hall**

**Attendance:** Christine Gray-Mullen (Chair), William Mullin, Charles Moran, Donald Wise, Richard Fein, Guilford Mooring (Superintendent, DPW). Guests: Public Hearing attendance--see attached list.

**Administrative:**

The Minutes of the PWC March 2014 meeting were approved 5-0.

The next meetings are scheduled for Thursday, May 1 and Thursday, June 12.

**Project updates:**

Water and sewer work on Pine St. will be done by July; base coat paving will begin then, paid out of Water/Sewer fund. Contractor for Harkness Rd. and Wildflower Dr. has been chosen; sewer extension will begin in May.

**Old Business:**

**Mill River Bridge:** The Selectboard approved the Committee's recommendation for the reconstruction of the Mill River bridge at its last meeting. The Committee discussed the possibility of limiting access this summer to portions of the old bridge that might become unsafe.

Public questions and comments:

- \* Any engineering claims about the bridge needs should be backed up by a written report.
- \* Old bridge should be kept open to pedestrians until it is rebuilt. The new bridge should allow access for pedestrians viewing the waterfall.
- \* The closing of the bridge has limited traffic access in North Amherst, so consideration should be given to improving other access routes.

**Pine Street:** The Committee has until July to make a decision on the final version of the Pine St. reconstruction. A base coat will be put on this summer that will allow the final configuration to fit with any of the three general options:

- 1) Bike lanes and sidewalks. This is the plan that we previously voted as favorite. Variations are possible; the sidewalk could be moved from north side to the south, but that would require more powerline pole replacement costing \$40K per pole. Sufficient trees have already removed for this version.
- 2) Multiuse path (MUP). This version is a more recent suggestion and is preferred by the Public Transportation and Bicycle Committee (PTBC) with the MUP on the south side. It would require further tree removal. However, in places it would be quite close to the roadway. Curbcuts would be fewer with the MUP on the north side. Curbcuts and nearness to road could be minimized by switching from one side to the other. Placement on the south requires considerable pole moving. The MUP would be 8 feet wide but that can be less.
- 3) Doing nothing. This option would replace the road in its present configuration with no sidewalk improvements or bike lanes. It saves about \$1M.

Public comments/answers to questions:

- \* Plan areas in red are grass areas that will be paved. The Town already owns the right of way so no private land taking is needed.
- \* The idea of using a traffic circle at the Pine/East Pleasant intersection is best. A "mini-donut" would suffice rather than the larger roundabout ("donut") or rotary.

- \* Mr. O'Connor submitted a written comment (attached). He added that safety and fiscal responsibility are the main concerns. A MUP is not needed; an uphill bike lane (eastbound) with none on the downhill side (westbound) would suffice, with a sidewalk included.
- \* The roadway should have narrow lanes to moderate speeds. An MUP is unsafe for both walkers and bikers. It is especially unsafe for walkers on a downhill section. A two-way MUP is especially dangerous.
- \* The present situation is unsafe; the sidewalk is too close to the road. The area is widely used by bikers and walkers, and so needs to be made safe.
- \* If there is a MUP or a sidewalk it is important to put sufficient space between that and the road for safety.
- \* While downhill bikers can maintain speed relative to traffic on the road, uphill bikers need a safe refuge.
- \* An MUP very close to the street will not be used. Where will the snow from the street go? Who will plow it?
- \* The Complete Streets concept is very difficult to carry out in Western Massachusetts. If one needs to take land from an APR or conservation land to widen a road, the Town must get permission from the Legislature. They will require return of equivalent land elsewhere.
- \* A way to walk to North Amherst is needed; now the only possibility is through the woods. An MUP would not feel safe for either a walker or a beginning biker.
- \* The crosswalk at Cushman is not in a safe place. It should be moved.
- \* Potholes on Pine have been useful in limiting large truck traffic; speed has been reduced. Perhaps there should be speed bumps on this road. (Note: They would not be allowed here because it is a main road without a near alternative.)
- \* Best alternative is a sidewalk on the north side with a bike lane uphill on the south side. Fast bikers can use regular road downhill going west.
- \* The Pine street cohousing has a greenway to the Simple Gifts Farm stand. If a crosswalk were put in near the Pine St. bus stop, it would facilitate others using the greenway.
- \* Trees block a good sightline at the Pine/EastPleasant intersection. Make it easier to see oncoming traffic.

Later discussion by the Committee seemed to favor the idea of a sidewalk on the north and a bike lane on the roadway on the south. Mr. Mooring will have designs made to show that possibility.

**Transportation Task Force:** Moran and Gray-Mullen met with potential contractors and answered questions. Proposals for constructing a Townwide Transportation Plan are due in late April; it seems likely there will be several given the interest shown.

**Paving Schedule:** Two roads from last year are to be finished. The Farview Neighborhood will be started. The West St. project has been delayed for a couple of years so that about \$100K is available for other use. The Highpoint project has been dropped since it is possible sewer work will be needed there. Base coat on Pine St. will be done this summer.

#### **New Business:**

**Triangle/ East Pleasant intersection:** With the large amount of revitalization work being done in the north end of the downtown area, it is possible to get MassWorks grants to redo this intersection, which presently is rated F because of the lack of left turn lanes on Triangle. Possible actions are (A) Widening Triangle to put in the left-turn lanes. (B) Building a rotary. (C) Leaving it the way it is.

Option (B) has the advantage of taking less land from Kendrick Park and other abutters. It is also cheaper to do than (A). The redevelopment in the area increases the likelihood of a grant for the intersection improvement. The need for taking some land along Triangle was discussed.

The Committee voted to adjourn at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Mullin, Sec'y *pro tem*.

# Sign-in Sheet - PWC 4/3

PRINT NAME

ADDRESS

RENE THEBERGE

250 SHUTESBURY RD

CHARLIE RICH

26 PLUMTREES

Nancy Farber

7 Lilac Lane

JAMES COOPER

449 PINE ST.

Ann Hollingworth

83 Pine St.

Scott Merzsch

Gazette / Bulletin

NEAL ERICKSON

316 PINE ST

Mary Sayer

155 Pine St.

Marcy Sala

161 Pine St. Apt. E

David Katz

11 Morgan Circle

Chris Brestup (Planning Dept)

Conservation & Development

Jim Johnson

36 Emily Ln.

Hélène Perot

Vincent O'Connor

175 Summer Street #12

James Bicknell

120 Pine St.

Paige Wilder

73 Farring St.

Jeff Brown

391 Bay Road

Edgar Sabroga

408 Pine St.

3 April 2014

Chair and Members  
Public Works Committee  
Town of Amherst  
Amherst MA 01002

Re: Pine Street Reconstruction

Dear Chair and Members:

Thanks for your continuing efforts to seek advice from the general public and residents of Pine Street. I've lived near and bicycled on Pine Street for almost 40 years. With regard to the proposals under review this evening, I have the following general and specific comments:

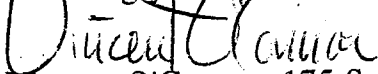
#### General Issues

- Tree removal ought to be minimized. Trees, utilized by Amherst College on South Pleasant Street, help visually narrow a road, thus helping to reduce/control speed;
- There is a need for an uphill/eastbound bike lane of 5 feet in width where there is curbing and 4 feet where there is none. I would discourage the use of curbing on Pine Street between Harris Street and the bus pulloff at the corner of Sand Hill Road and Pine Street;
- Westbound adult bicyclists can safely use the Pine Street roadway without the need for a separate bike lane that would widen Pine Street and endanger all concerned including bicyclists by encouraging increased motor vehicle speed. Children and less secure cyclists should be encouraged by appropriate signage to use Sand Hill Road and State Street as a bypass to access the sidewalk to North Amherst at State and Pine Streets and return the same way to the sidewalk on the east side of Pine Street commencing at Sand Hill Road;
- The sidewalk from North Amherst to State Street on the north side of Pine Street should be thoroughly repaired, well-separated from the Pine Street roadway, elevated above the roadway, but extended only as far as 226 Pine Street. A sidewalk from 316 Pine Street east to the Sand Hill Road/Pine Street bus stop should be considered if financially feasible;
- Effective storm water control and a primary road foundation are absolutely necessary if the proposed work is to last more than a few years in good condition.

#### Specific Areas

- State Street ought to enter Pine Street at an angle as close to 90° as possible, allowing the bus pulloff to be located away from the corner of Pine and State Streets. There ought to be an east/west crosswalk for users of the sidewalk on the east side of Pine Street and a pedestrian operated, signalized north/south crosswalk to access the sidewalk and the bus pulloff;
- Work on the intersection of Pine and East Pleasant Streets ought to involve the removal of islands and signage on islands, take a minimal amount of land, add curbing on the westbound lane of Pine Street and on the northbound lane of East Pleasant Street to control passing on the right, speeding and failure to stop at STOP signs, and provide no additional lanes.
- The Bridge Street curve ought to be adjusted to a constant radius, and superelevated to help prevent motor vehicles from sliding off the road onto the Cushman Common. A bike lane should be on the Common side of the road and south/west bound cyclists use the travel lane.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of these proposals, I am, sincerely,



Vincent O'Connor. 175 Summer Street #12. 413/549-0810